

OCCASIONAL PAPERS
ON THE HISTORY OF
BOSTON COLLEGE

THE GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS ORIGINAL
IN HOPKINS HOUSE



Rev. Charles F. Donovan, S.J.
University Historian
February 1997



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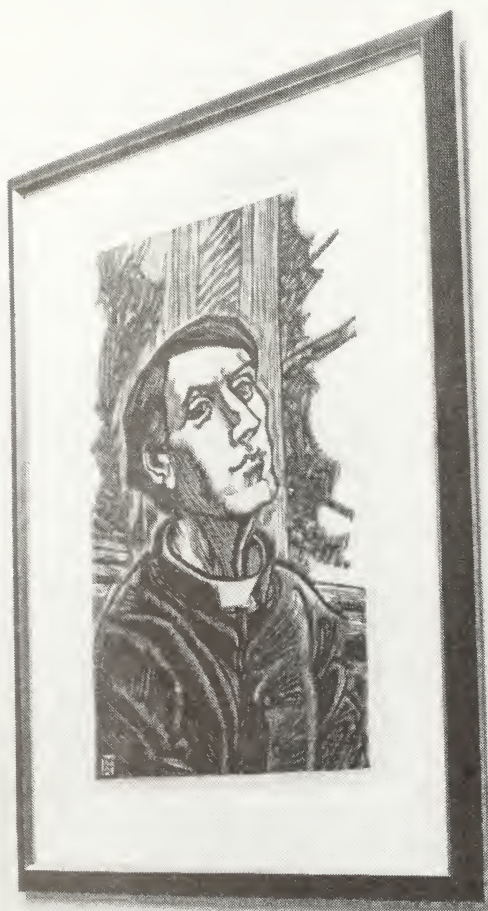
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The title of this paper must be explained at once lest the reader be misled. There is, indeed, now ensconced and on view in Hopkins House an original work in Gerard Manley Hopkins' own hand. But it is not a poem, as first written or as emended or as transcribed by Hopkins. Rather, it is a pencil drawing.

In the summer of 1995 Burns librarian Robert K. O'Neill found in Bertram Rota, Ltd. Booksellers, London, a 3½ by 4½ inches drawing by Hopkins of a distinguished mansion in Shanklin, Isle of Wight. It is an accurate but not photographic rendering of the building, gently humanized by the inclusion of an unobtrusive relaxed figure in the doorway. Boston College's acquisition of this small gem was made possible by the generosity of Alice Scanlon, a member of the Burns family that has so enriched the university through enlightened benefactions.

Hopkins was an amateur — which is not to say mediocre — artist, and drawing was for him a spontaneous and easy form of communication. Paging through published editions of the letters and journals of Hopkins, a reader is struck by the number of small drawings he used to illustrate points in his text. Drawing was, in fact, part of his informal education. W. H. Gardner, editor of an influential edition of Hopkins' poetry, noted of the Hopkins household: "In this family, music and drawing were sedulously cultivated, and two of Gerard's brothers became professional artists. He himself was an excellent draughtsman, and his later skill, as a poet, in communicating through words the essence and individuality of visual forms in nature was partly fostered by his early training with the pencil."¹ A more recent critic, Jerome Bump, relates the Hopkins family drawing exercises to a centuries-old tradition, dating back to Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier*, wherein drawing, music, and writing were critical instruments in the education of gentlemen and gentle ladies.²



1989 print of a woodcut image of Hopkins by American artist Robert F. McGovern, in the hallway of Hopkins House. (Appears also on back cover.)

So in the summer of 1863, when Gerard Manley Hopkins vacationed with his family for a month on the Isle of Wight, he spent much time with his brother Arthur walking along quiet paths and cliffs overlooking the sea, stopping here and there as both sketched scenes or particular trees or flowers or cloud formations. Gerard carried with him a small green sketchbook only 4½ x 5½ inches in size. During his life he had four such sketchbooks, and the one used on the Isle of Wight was the first and the quickest filled, started in March of 1862 and filled by August 1863. While the creation of Hopkins' drawings was in a sense casual, depending on the moment's inspiration or whim, they clearly weren't casual to him. To many he affixed his special monogram as a signature and usually the date, and often a descriptive phrase to capture the context of the drawing. For example: "In a wood of oak and ash. Shanklin July 11. 1863" "Rock in the cliff copse. July. 1863." "Shanklin. Manor Farm. July 19." "Buds of the white lily" "Study of the Culver Cliffs (from the rocks below) July 19th 1863." "Top of the Whalpen Chine near Blackgang. July 22, drawn in a gale." "Ruins of Brook Church, from Shalcombe Down, July 24." "Head of Shanklin Chine. Aug. 4". "In hollow between Apse and the American Woods, near Shanklin, Aug. 8."

A touching proof of just how much these youthful drawings meant to Hopkins is the fact that twenty-six years later he sent one of his sketches, on which he had written "Shanklin, Isle of Wight, 1866," along with a letter to his mother for her birthday. Between the vacation excursions to the Isle of Wight in the 1860s and the birthday letter to his mother dated March 2, 1889, Hopkins had embraced the Catholic faith, graduated from Oxford, and become a Jesuit priest. The letter, sent from University College, Dublin, reads in part:

My Dearest Mother, – I wish you a very happy birthday tomorrow and many happy returns. I enclose an old sketch of mine, rather drawing, for it is in high finish, but unhappily it never was completed. It lay so long in drawers and so on that it has grown dirty, as you see, beyond what can be safely touched and is sadly rubbed too. Seeing this I thought I would get it photographed by a friend, which has been done. I now send you therefore the original, disreputable as it looks, but it is the best of my drawings....

After a few comments about family and weather, the loving son signed his name, but added a postscript: "I enclose one of the photographic copies."³

Humble though it was, the drawing seemed to Hopkins a worthy gift for his mother on her sixty-eighth birthday. He gave her the



"In hollow between Apse and the American Woods, near Shanklin, Aug. 8."

original sketch, but as indicated in the letter, he made sure that he had a photographic copy. The gift must have been cherished by Mrs. Hopkins, since Gerard unexpectedly died of typhoid fever thirteen weeks after her birthday.

From the Manor Farm in Shanklin, Isle of Wight, during that vacation of 1863, Hopkins wrote a friend that he was there "with all our tribe," meaning his parents and seven siblings, four of whom (two sisters and two brothers) were under ten years of age. The eldest of the children, Gerard reached his nineteenth birthday during the stay in Manor Farm House, the impressive building he captured in the pencil sketch that is a prized acquisition of Burns Library, on loan — kindly but appropriately — to Hopkins House. When he made that sketch, Gerard had just completed his first term at Oxford, where he was enrolled in Balliol College. In his day Balliol was one of the smaller colleges, enrolling only 90 undergraduates. Among the 90, ten places

were reserved for candidates from Scottish universities.⁴ One of the Scotsmen, Alexander William Mowbray Baillie (known to family and friends as Mowbray), was a classmate and friend of Hopkins, and we learn much of Hopkins' reactions to and activities in Shanklin and environs from a letter he wrote Baillie (whom he always addressed as "Dear Baillie" through a lifelong correspondence). The letter evinces the high spirits of a freshman — vivacious mentally, playful with words and ideas, amicably contentious. He couldn't resist joshing Baillie about his northern origins, using lines of Tennyson's poem "The Daisy" to aver that were Baillie with him in Shanklin he would have

...forgot the clouded Forth,
The gloom that saddens heaven and earth,
the biting East, the misty summer
And grey metropolis of the North.

To let his friend know what he was missing, Hopkins added: "The sea is brilliantly coloured and always calm, bathing delightful, horses and boats to be obtained, walks wild and beautiful, sketches charming, walking tours and excursions, poetic downs, the lovely Chine,⁵ fine cliffs, everything (except odious Fashionables)." The "Fashionables," one takes it, were short-term vacationers who crowded the popular beaches.

Hopkins let his classmate know his vacation was not all relaxation. He wrote:

In the mornings I read the Histories of Tacitus. I must say they are very hard, and the cruces [disputed or possibly corrupt passages] have a hopelessness about them which I do not think I find any where else in the classics. I have Tacitus and Cicero's Philippics to read (enough certainly) alone, for would you believe it? I have no Greek lexicon of any kind here.

Hopkins forgot to bring his Greek lexicon and seemed bemused that the vacation resort did not have some kind of Greek dictionary available. Boston College faculty members may want to call to their classes' attention how Oxford students spent vacation mornings in 1863, the year that the Boston College charter was granted.

The letter to Baillie continued with a discussion of the British painter John Edward Millais and especially his painting "The Eve of St. Agnes," which had been inspired by Keats' poem of the same title. Hopkins was an enthusiastic disciple of Ruskin's views on painting and also those of Millais and the Pre-Raphaelites, with their emphasis on art as a reflection of nature and natural objects. The poet's detailed recording of things of nature — flowers, trees, birds, skies, etc. — in



G. M. Hopkins' pencil sketch of the Manor House, Shanklin, with the frame removed, making clearer the Hopkins monogram in the lower right-hand corner. (On the cover, it appears in the frame in which it came into Boston College's possession.)

letters, diaries, and journals reveals an artistic habit that influenced not only his drawing but his poetry as well.

The final long paragraph of the letter to Baillie deals specifically with Hopkins' Isle of Wight sketching as well as his evolving love affair with nature:

I am sketching (in pencil chiefly) a good deal. I venture to hope you will approve of some of the sketches in a Ruskinian point of view – if you do not, who will, my sole congenial thinker on art? There are the most deliciously graceful Giottesque ashes (should one say ash?) here – I do not mean Giottesque though, Peruginesque, Fra-Angelical (!), in Raphael's earlier manner. I think I have told you that I have particular periods of admiration for particular things in nature; for a certain time I am astonished by the beauty of a tree, shape, effect, etc., then when the passion, so to speak, has subsided, it is consigned to my treasury of explored beauty, and acknowledged with admiration and interest ever after, while something new takes its place in my enthusiasm. The present fury is ash, and perhaps barley and two shapes of growth in leaves and one in tree boughs and also a conformation of fine-weather cloud.

The letter was signed “Gerard M. Hopkins Manor Farm, Shanklin, Isle of Wight, July 13.”⁶

The Oxford of Hopkins’ and Baillie’s day was in the afterglow of the “Oxford Movement,” the effort of some clergymen and Oxford professors to reform the Church of England, ridding it of Protestant influence and restoring both doctrines and practices of the pre-Reformation church. John Henry Newman had been its most influential spokesman, before his conversion to Catholicism two decades earlier. Baillie, a Presbyterian, was untouched by the theological and religious jockeying around him, becoming, as someone said, a sort of atheist. But Hopkins was very much caught up in the spirit of the Oxford Movement, and in the fall of his last year at Oxford October 21, 1866, he was received into the Catholic Church by none other than the great Father Newman. The spiritual and religious gap that developed between the classmates did not end their friendship or keep them from a lively correspondence that lasted until the year before Hopkins’ death in 1889. One of Hopkins’ most respected commentators, Norman H. MacKenzie, called the Hopkins-Baillie correspondence (of which only the Hopkins letters exist) “ebullient and amusing.”⁷ Particularly after Hopkins entered the Jesuit order and became a priest, the mental compatibility and ease of the two men with each other reflect a largeness of heart in both, but especially in Hopkins who became, without doubt, a most single-minded Catholic.

A couple of excerpts from Hopkins’ journal in the spring after his graduation from Oxford demonstrate the meticulous recording of facts of nature that he kept up through the years, as well as his precise memory of the beauties of Shanklin. He is about to make a major life decision: Shall he become a priest? Shall he join a religious order? He decides to make a retreat — a period of meditation and prayer — at the Jesuit house in Roehampton, just southwest of central London. The entry for April 27, 1868: “Generally fine betw[een] hard showers, some hail, wh[ich] made the evening very cold, a flash of lightning, a clap of thunder, the bright rainbow; some grey cloud betw[een] showers ribbed and draped and some wild bright big brown flix [i.e., like animal hair or fur] at the border of a big rack with blue rising behind — though it was too big in character to be called flix. To Roehampton into retreat.” Then three entries at Roehampton:⁸

May 3 Bright, with haze – dark-in-bright – hot, and like summer; when cloud formed it was delicately barred – Cuckoo singing all day. Oaks out, wych-elms not, except a few leaves.

May 4 Dull; then fine; cold, esp[ecially] in wind. Note the elm here on one side of beautiful build[ing] with one great limb over

hanging the sunk fence into the Park and headed like the one near the house at Shanklin but when seen fr[om] the opposite side to this limb uninteresting or clumsy.

May 5 Cold. Resolved to be a religious.

During the retreat the poet-in-prose recorded transitory details of nature: temperature, cloud formations, singing birds, blossoming trees. But inside the poet great and deep thoughts were going on – and a decision made: “Resolved to be a religious,” meaning he would enter a religious order. The following September he entered the Society of Jesus, the Jesuits.

One further exchange between Hopkins and Baillie is mentioned, not because it relates to Shanklin or the Isle of Wight or Hopkins’ drawing, but for its interest to a university readership. After ordination, Hopkins served in parishes in various cities in England and Scotland. For ten months he was at St. Aloysius Church in Oxford, and from there he went to St. Joseph’s parish in Bedford Leigh, near Manchester. From the latter address he wrote to Baillie on November 19, 1879. He mentioned his experience in Oxford and commented: “My work was parish work and left no time, that was of any use, for reading. Oxford was not for me a congenial field, fond as I am of it; I am far more at home with the Lancashire people”.⁹ We do not have Baillie’s reply or its date, but from Hopkins’ next letter it is clear that his Oxford classmate was distressed at Hopkins’ reaction to Oxford twelve years after graduation. Hopkins’ reply, sent from Liverpool, was dated May 22, 1880, six months after his letter referring to Oxford, and he was at pains to disabuse his friend of the idea he was disloyal to their university. These were his comments on the subject:

You say it is something of an affectation for me to run up the Lancashire people and run down “Oxonians” – unpleasant word, let us say the Oxford ones. I do not remember quite what I said; are you sure it was, as you assume, of Gown, not Town I was speaking? Now I do like both. Not to love my University would be to undo the very buttons of my being and as for the Oxford townspeople I found them in my ten months’ stay among them very deserving of affection – though somewhat stiff, standoff, and depressed. And in that stay I saw very little of the University. But I could not but feel how alien it was, how chilling, and deeply to be distrusted. I could have wished, and yet I could not, that there had been no one that had known me there. As a fact there were many and those friendly, some cordially so, but with others I c[oul]d not feel at home. With the Lancastrians

it is the reverse; I felt as if [I] had been born to deal with them. Religion, you know, enters very deep; in reality it is the deepest impression I have in speaking of people, that they are or are not of my religion. And then it is sweet to be a little flattered and I can truly say in the most transparently cringing way I seldom am. Now these Lancashire people of low degree or not high degree are those who most have seemed to me to welcome me and make much of me. This is, I suppose, what was on my mind.

Despite Hopkins' protestation that it was the townsfolk of Oxford he was comparing to Lancastrians, it is clear the hurt and discomfort he experienced was from university people who had been acquainted with him before his embracing Catholicism. He felt some rejection or coolness from those who perhaps considered him a deserter of their cause. At the same time his admission in this letter of his consciousness of religious differences when conversing with people may have partly contributed to the awkwardness in conversing with acquaintances from his undergraduate days.

Baillie could hardly have been reassured by his friend's characterization of their university, perceived as a Jesuit priest, as alien, chilling, and deeply to be distrusted. And yet the exchange between these Oxonians, to use Baillie's unpleasant word, elicited from Hopkins what must be one of the most poetic and ringing expressions of fealty to one's alma mater in the English language: "*Not to love my University would be to undo the very buttons of my being.*" Boston College can hope that many of its students and graduates will or do consider their alma mater securely buttoned into their inmost being!

The last five years of Hopkins' life were spent in Dublin at University College. In 1883 the bishops of Ireland turned over to the Jesuits the Catholic University that Newman had headed several decades earlier, and Father William Delany, president of the new project, sought Jesuits with university qualifications from England, France, Germany, and Italy to help in staffing the College. Father Hopkins became a Fellow in Classics at University College.

In December 1884 Hopkins wrote to his sister Kate about his new position in Ireland. Once again the subject of his drawing comes up. He writes:¹¹

A dear old French Father, very clever and learned and a great photographer, who at first wanted me to take to photography with him, which indeed in summer could be pleasant enough, finding that once I used to draw, got me to bring him the few remains I still have, cows and horses in chalk done in Wales too long ago to think



Green, Godshill Church and
"Appledurcombe"
July 25

"Beech, Godshill Church behind. Fr. Appledurcombe. July 25"

of, and admired them to that degree that he is urgent with me to go on drawing at all hazards; but I do not see how that could be now, so late: if anybody had said the same 10 years ago it might have been different.

Four years later in a letter to Robert Bridges, himself a poet and Hopkins' literary confidant and the person to whom he entrusted his poems, the Jesuit once more wrote rather ruefully of his drawing: ¹²

I have had to get glasses, by the bye: just now I cannot be happy either with or without them. The oculist says my sight is very good and my eye perfectly healthy but that like Jane Nightwork [2 Hen. IV, iii. 2.] I am old. [He was 44!] And, strange to say, I have taken to drawing again. Perverse Fortune or something perverse (try me): Why did I not take to it before?

Clearly Hopkins' lifelong urge or instinct to draw seems to indicate that he was confident he could have become proficient at the art. Whether he would have, had he devoted as much time to his drawing as to his poetry, is a matter for speculation.

One of Hopkins' most sympathetic critics, Norman White, is not particularly sympathetic to his drawing until he relates it to his poetry. Here is his provocative analysis:¹³

Regarded merely as drawings executed between 1862 and 1869 "in a Ruskinian point of view," they are typical amateur products of their age, keeping honorable but undistinguished company with numerous leaves from sketch-pads lovingly brought back from thousands of middle-class picnics and sketching trips. Looked at merely as anonymous examples of talented but decidedly amateur art, from an age when such talent was as frequently found as good amateur photography is nowadays, the drawings are not unique and are of historic or nostalgic, but not intrinsic, interest.

But they are ordinary only for as long as they are seen as anonymous Victoriana. When admitted to be the part-time but serious ephemera of a minor artist who was also a major poet of nature and religion, much larger, more significant contexts suddenly appear valid – the previous hundred years' philosophical attitudes towards nature, their aesthetic expression, and the connexions between visual art and poetry. And a livelier part is added to the whole context when our response to the drawings is connected with the name "Hopkins," with its evocation of peculiar personal nature, circum-

stances and genius. Above all there is our bewildering knowledge that the same eyes and mind that produced these ordinary drawings somehow also produced the anything-but-ordinary, entirely distinctive and powerful poems of Gerard Hopkins.

Surely to Boston College, Hopkins' "Manor Farm, Shanklin" is an anything-but-ordinary possession as we reflect that the hand that sketched the open casements, and dormer windows and roof slates of the manor house also penned "The world is charged with the grandeur of God" and so many other imperishable verses. A Hopkins original is in our midst.

In Hopkins' letter to Bridges quoted above, he speaks of a perverse fortune that, after long neglect, he was again drawing. As he wrote of perverse fortune, he was not aware that in eight months the mind and heart that created his art would be forever stilled. Hopkins was only 44 when he died. Considering the longevity of his parents and siblings, his early death seems anomalous. His father lived to age 75 and his mother to 99. Apart from a brother, Felix, who died as an infant, his brothers Everard, Arthur, Cyril, and Lionel Charles lived to be 68, 83, 86, and 98 respectively, while sisters Kate, Grace, and Millicent lived to be 77, 88 and 95. But if Gerard's life seems, in human perspective, unfairly short, we give thanks for the brilliant accomplishments of the years given him.

Nine days after Hopkins' death, Mowbray Baillie wrote a touching note of condolence to his friend's mother in which he said of the poet-son: "It is impossible to say how much I owe to him. He is the one figure which fills my whole memory of my Oxford life. There is hardly a reminiscence with which he is not associated. All my intellectual growth, and a very large proportion of those Oxford days, I owe to his companionship.... Apart from my own nearest relations, I never had so strong an affection for anyone."¹⁴

A friend of Baillie's reported an even more poignant comment: "He [Baillie] was brought up a Presbyterian, but his need of rational proofs made a kind of atheist of him, and one of his greatest regrets in no longer believing in a second life was that he wanted so badly 'somewhere, somehow, to meet Gerard Hopkins again.'¹⁵

Hopkins was by no means the only nineteenth century literary figure to vacation on the Isle of Wight. A 1973 history of the town of Shanklin boasts of visits from Keats, Dickens, George Eliot, and Paul Claudel as well as Hopkins.¹⁶ In this largely pictorial history, photos of three of Hopkins' early pencil drawings are included: "In hollow between Apse and the American Woods, near Shanklin," which is reproduced in this paper, "Rock in the Cliff Copse, Shanklin," and

the 1866 “Shanklin, Isle of Wight” that Hopkins sent to his mother in 1889. Also included in the pictorial history is a copy of a photograph (“about 1870”) of the Manor House as Hopkins drew it seven years earlier. The title given the photo is “Shanklin Manor: Haymaking.” The angle at which the house is viewed is almost the same as that of the Hopkins drawing, but the house is more distant, with a low stone wall separating it from a field in which stands a two-horse wagon piled with hay, while six workmen with hay rakes pause momentarily from their labor to stare at the camera.

The caption on the photograph says: “The 17th century manor-house, rebuilt in 1883, is seen in the background.” The house, as rebuilt, still stands and still welcomes guests as it did the Hopkins family, now as Shanklin Manor House Hotel. The photograph on page 14 shows how the building that Hopkins drew was enlarged in 1883, extended at both ends and altered over the doorway to match the new wings. The photo is from the cover of the hotel’s current promotional literature.

The town of Shanklin honors Keats’ visits but not Hopkins’. Near the Shanklin chine that Hopkins mentioned is a park named Keats Green. Also, in the vicinity of the public library is the house where Keats stayed in 1817 and/or 1819, the years in which he visited Shanklin. On the front door is a dignified bronze sign with a simple one-word message: KEATS.

Of course there is a difference between the Keats visits to Shanklin and the Hopkins visits. When he vacationed at Shanklin, Keats, though young (not 25 years old), was already an established poet, whereas Hopkins was an unknown Oxford undergraduate during his Shanklin visits. Perhaps it is time, however, that the Isle of Wight and Shanklin catch up to the relative prominence of the two poets today. Boston College students of the 1930s paged Palgrave’s *Golden Treasury* for their poetry class and of course were appropriately impressed by the eleven poems of Keats the anthology included, especially “On First Looking into Chapman’s Homer” (pushed by the Jesuit teacher, who had the same students in Greek and Latin classes) and “Ode to Autumn.” Though Palgrave outlived Hopkins, Hopkins’ poetry was not published until the next century, and anyway Palgrave included no living poets. But today’s student of poetry would find in the *Golden Treasury*, as updated by John Press in 1965, fourteen poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, including “Pied Beauty” and “The Windhover.”

Incidentally, in 1991 *The Chronicle of Higher Education* poked fun at an anthology of the 100 most anthologized poems in the English language. But bowing to Americans’ love affair with top ten lists, *The Chronicle* named the ten most frequently anthologized poems. Keats’



Late twentieth century view of the Shanklin Manor House Hotel.

“Ode to Autumn” was number 3 and Hopkins’ “Pied Beauty” was number 5!¹⁷

As mentioned earlier, Hopkins entrusted his poems to his friend Robert Bridges for preservation. Hopkins died in 1889, but it was not until 1918 that Bridges published the Jesuit’s work. Hopkins’ innovative and somewhat idiosyncratic poetical style put critics off at first, but after the second edition of 1930 he gradually became accepted, and something of a Hopkins cult developed. It is truly remarkable that the poet whose work was unpublished in his lifetime and came into the public domain 30 years after his death was honored in 1975 by acceptance into the Poets’ Corner of Westminster Abbey only 86 years after his death and, more significantly, only 57 years after the publication of his poetry. In contrast, after Keats’ death in 1821, the poet who some call the greatest of the Romantics had to wait 133 years for the same honor in 1954. But Keats was a free and passionate spirit, and arbiters of presence in the Poets’ Corner may have some non-literary concerns when making their decisions.

Hopkins’ memorial plaque was unveiled on December 8, 1975, and the following day *The Times* (London) carried a literate – indeed Hopkinsian – account of the event that deserves repeating here:¹⁸

A heaven-haven memorial

By Philip Howard

Gerard Manley Hopkins, the God-haunted, word-haunted poet who became posthumously one of the most influential founding fathers of modern poetry, was fittingly honoured beside his peers in Westminster Abbey yesterday.

Poets’ Corner, in the south transept of the abbey, is the nearest place we have in this world to heaven-haven for English poets, out of the swing of random and unjust contemporary acclaim.

A memorial plaque was unveiled between those of Eliot and Auden [and Henry James and John Masfield] to commemorate in stone the immortal diamond, as he described his soul and all souls in “That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire.”

The innovator of sprung rhythm and long chains of assonances and onomatopoeia is the first Roman Catholic poet to be commemorated in the abbey since Dryden. He is the first Roman Catholic priest and religious to attain a plaque in Poets’ Corner.



Photograph of the Hopkins plaque in Poets' Corner, Westminster Abbey, in the reception room.

So the service, on the centenary of the wreck of the *Deutschland* in the Thames estuary, which inspired Hopkins to start writing again, was as much an ecumenical as a literary occasion.

The Roman Catholic hierarchy from the Apostolic Delegate down attended, to honour the greatest Jesuit poet to emerge from that brilliant but not often poetic society. Leading lay Roman Catholics watched their leader, the Duke of Norfolk, unveil the memorial and entrust it to the Dean and Chapter of Westminster.

Sir John Gielgud made the air reverberate and tremble with readings from the best-known Hopkins, from "The Windhover" to "The Wreck of the *Deutschland*" and demonstrated that Hopkins can be declaimed; though you probably need a Gielgud voice to do it justice. Mr. Handley Derry, a great-nephew of Hopkins, laid a wreath on the slab.

The Dean of Westminster, Dr. Edward Carpenter, made welcoming ecumenical references to the fact that Hopkins was a priest and that the day was the celebration of the Conception of Our Lady.

In his address, Father Peter Levi, S.J., said "He had a restricted, unhappy life. He suffered intensely in ways that we can hardly understand, and he could hardly express. In his lifetime he was not taken seriously as a theologian, or a poet, or a scholar. And yet he had a profound and unconfined freedom of spirit, which is the work of Christ in every servant of God who comes face to face with Him. That is what made him so great as a poet. It is something like love."

The man who wrote "The only just literary critic is Christ, who prizes, is proud of, and admires, more than any man, more than the receiver himself can, the gifts of his own making" would not have been flattered by his overdue recognition in the abbey. But he could not have helped being moved by the sincerity of his early admirers.

The Month, the Jesuit periodical that rejected "The Wreck of the *Deutschland*" when Hopkins submitted it in 1875, today publishes an apology for that majestic literary blunder, now seen to be one of the greatest in the history of publishing. It says: "The one unwise blunder has gained for *The Month* more notoriety than all the distinguished articles it has wisely published."

To return from London and Westminster Abbey to Chestnut Hill, when Father W. Seavey Joyce was named Boston College president in 1968 he decided to move the president's office from St. Mary's Hall to a house the university had recently acquired at 18 Old Colony Road. With a strong feeling for Boston history and Boston College's ties to Boston, he named the president's house Botolph, for Saint Botolph, the patron of Boston in England, the town whose name was adopted by the first settlers in the Bay Colony.¹⁹

As part of his move of the president's office from St. Mary's Hall, Father Joyce asked his academic vice president, who had also been located in the Jesuit residence, to move to a recently acquired house at 116 College Road. Like Father Joyce, the vice president looked to England for a name for his new office, choosing not a medieval saint, but a Jesuit poet. So since 1969 the Boston College property at 116 College has been Hopkins House.

In a first floor room of Hopkins House hangs a reproduction of one of the several standard photographs of the Jesuit poet. Beneath it is a photo of an enlarged signature: "Your affectionate friend, Gerard M. Hopkins, S.J. May 29, 1885" (A few years ago an undergraduate visitor to Hopkins House asked if the signature was from a letter the vice president had received from Hopkins!) The first floor corridor wall has a copy of another standard photograph of the poet, with the caption "Father Gerard Hopkins, S.J." On either side of the photo are enlarged copies of two Hopkins poems in his own handwriting: "The Starlight Night" and "God's Grandeur."

On a small wall supporting folding glass doors that open into a sun porch is an original photograph (in color) of the memorial tablet for Hopkins in Westminster Abbey. The photograph (see page 16) was taken in 1979 for Hopkins House by Pamela Dickson, then a student at Imperial College, London.²⁰ The tablet reads:²¹

A. M. D. G.
ESSE QVAM VIDERI
GERARD
MANLEY
HOPKINS
SJ
18~~8~~4-1889
Priest & poet
'Immortal diamond'
Buried at Glasnevin, Dublin



Front entrance of 116 College Road, Hopkins House.



Photograph and signature of Hopkins in the reception room, first floor, Hopkins House.



Photograph of Hopkins and enlargements of two of his handwritten sonnets in the hallway.

The centenary of Hopkins' death was 1989, and many commemorations, religious and artistic, were held to mark the occasion. One centennial work of art is a woodcut likeness of Hopkins made by American artist Robert F. McGovern. One of the early prints of McGovern's work hangs in the first floor hallway of Hopkins House. (See page 2 and back cover.)



The Hopkins drawing in the office of the University Historian.

Into this modest shrine to the Jesuit poet in the fall of 1995 came, on loan from Burns Library, a work of his hand — a personal memento of a happy summer vacation with his family. It is a Hopkins pencil drawing of the Manor House of Shanklin. Courtesy of Robert K. O'Neill, Burns librarian, today 116 College Road wears the name Hopkins House with even more meaning and pride than it did before.

ENDNOTES

1. W. H. Gardner, ed., *Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Selection of His Poems and Prose* (Baltimore, Md.: Penguin Books, 1953), Introduction, p. xvi.
2. Jerome Bump, "Hopkins' Drawings" in *All My Eyes See*, R.K.R. Thornton, ed., Sunderland Arts Centre (Newcastle on Tyne: Ceolfrith Press, 1975), p. 70.
3. Claude Colleer Abbott, ed., *Further Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 195.
4. Norman White, *Hopkins: A Literary Biography* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1992), p. 47.
5. Synonyms for *chine* in many dictionaries are *chasm*, *ravine*, or *gorge*. The Oxford English Dictionary adds: "On the Isle of Wight and the Hampshire coast, a deep and narrow ravine cut in soft rock strata by a stream descending steeply to the sea."
6. Abbott, *op. cit.*, pp. 200-202.
7. Norman H. MacKenzie, *A Reader's Guide to Gerard Manley Hopkins* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1981), p. 226.
8. Gardner, *op. cit.*, p. 110.
9. C. C. Abbott, *op. cit.*, p. 243.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 244-245.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 165.
12. Claude Colleer Abbott, ed., *The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges* (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), p. 296.
13. Norman White in *All My Eyes See*, p. 58.
14. C. C. Abbott, *Further Letters*, p. 449.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Lindsay Boynton, *Georgian and Victorian Shanklin: A Pictorial History 1700-1900* (Shanklin, Isle of Wight: privately published, 1973).
17. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 9, 1991.
18. Attention should be called to a slender volume, *Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Jesuit in Poets' Corner*, in part because of its author's connection with Boston College. Rev. William Van Etten Casey, S.J., was at Boston College for ten years in the 1950s and early 1960s, serving as chairman of the Theology Department, as dean of the College of Arts and Sciences for four years, and as the first academic vice president. In the fall of 1988 *Boston College Magazine* published an article on Hopkins by Father Casey, which became the first part of the volume here recommended. The second part of the volume is a spritely one-person play, in which the spirit of Hopkins hovers over the Poets' Corner tablet saluting him. Father Casey has the deceased Hopkins reflecting with irony and wit on the vagaries of his life that had puzzled him on earth. Father Casey's book was published in 1990 by Loyola University Press.
19. George E. Ryan of the class of 1951, distinguished historian and for many years now a star writer for *The Pilot*, wrote a wonderful book on St. Botolph, *Botolph of Boston* (Boston: privately published, 1971), in which he devotes several pages (187-89) to Botolph House at Boston College.

20. The photographer's name is now Pamela Birch. Mrs. Birch lives in Chiddingfold, Surrey.

21. The letters A.M.D.G. at the top of the tablet stand for the Jesuit motto: *ad maiorem Dei gloriam* (for the greater glory of God). *Esse quam videri*, the Hopkins family motto, means "to be rather than to seem."



Gerard Manley Hopkins' monogram. The letter M dominates the figure, with the left side of the M curling around to form the letter G, and the solid vertical line in the middle of the M forming the back of the letter H.



GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS
WOODCUT BY ROBERT F. MCGOVERN, 1989

*And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs—
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.*

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS, *God's Grandeur*